Sadlier Religion

Catholic Saints with May Feast Days

RESOURCE KIT

Catholic Saints With May Feast Days

Studying the lives of the saints and holy people helps build family faith and inspires Catholic kids. Feast days are an opportunity to remember and be inspired by the lives of the saints, who are examples of holiness for us today. Children and families in your Catholic religious education program can use the short biographies and printable activities below to celebrate popular saint feast days in May!

In this kit you'll find short biographies and printable activities for these Catholic saints with May feast days:

- Saints Isidore and Maria
- Saint Madeline Sophie Barat
- Saint Philip Neri
- Saint Joan of Arc

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Saints Isidore and Maria

On May 15, the Church celebrates the feast day of Saints Isidore and Maria.

During the lifetimes of Isidore and Maria, there was a war between Christians and Muslins in Spain. Knights and peasants from across Europe took part in the first Crusade. They traveled to Jerusalem to fight for control of the city and make it Christian. The Chinese invented military rockets. The first European universities were started. Compasses were first used to tell direction when traveling by water.

Isidore was born in Spain to very poor yet very pious Catholic parents. At a very young age, Isidore was taught to work very hard. He worked for a wealthy Farm owner all of this life. He worked from sunrise to sunset. This work was physically hard, but he never complained and always did his best.

He began each day by going to Mass and praying. After Mass he would spend his days planting and plowing in the fields. Those who worked with him were angry that he attended Mass in the morning because this caused him to be late to work. They complained to the landowner. The landowner decided to watch Isidore work to see if he was getting his work done. He saw Isidore plowing the field with angels helping him.

Isidore married Maria and they had a son. Their son died when he was very young. From that moment on they dedicated their lives to serving God and others. Even though they did not have much, they always shared with the poor. Isidore and Maria also give us the example of sharing all that we have with those who are in need. They also took care of the animals and shared their food with them. Maria also became a saint.

No matter how ordinary our lives seem we can lead lives of holiness as Isidore and Maria did. No matter where we work or what we do, if it is at school, at home, or in an office, we should work with dignity and always do our best. Isidore and Maria also give us the example of sharing all that we have with those who are in need.

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Saint Madeline Sophie Barat

The Church celebrates the feast day of Saint Madeline Sophie Barat on May 25.

During Saint Madeline Sophie Barat's lifetime the storming of the Bastille and the French Revolution took place. This was a time of great unrest and violence in France. The guillotine was used to execute political prisoners. Napolean became the ruler of France. The United States of America declared independence and George Washington was president. During her lifetime, Abraham Lincoln also served as president of the United States and the American Civil War was fought.

Department stores, public buses and subways were invented. The telephone, the light bulb, and the phonograph were also invented during Saint Madeline Sophie Barat's lifetime.

Madeline Sophie Barat was born in France. She was the youngest of three children. Madeline Sophie was very enthusiastic about life and had common sense and good judgment. As a young child, she was devoted to her faith and prayer life. Her older brother, Louis, was a priest, and he was responsible for her education. Louis was very serious about his sister's education and made her learn Greek, Latin, physics, history, and mathematics. Even though there was little time in her life for play and friends, Madeline Sophie loved learning.

At the age of twenty-one, Madeline Sophie and three other young women started a religious order for women called the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Even though she was the youngest, Madeline Sophie became the superior, or leader, of this group and she remained so for sixty-three years. Since she loved learning and was able to get an education, she wanted to make education possible for other young women. Through her leadership, the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus opened schools for young women throughout France and eventually the world.

The religious order, the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, founded by Madeline Sophie Barat is still in existence today. This order still operates schools throughout the world for young women. These schools are known for providing an excellent education in a Christian environment.

St Madeline Sophie Barat shared her love of God and love of education with others. By opening schools, she made it possible for other young women to get the high quality education that she received. We can follow her example by sharing our blessings with others.

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Saint Philip Neri

On May 26, the Church celebrates the feast day of Saint Philip Neri.

Philip Neri was born on July 22, 1515. He lived during the Renaissance, a resurgence of learning, affecting philosophical thought, science and art. This was also a time of great exploration of the world. His life and work coincided with the Protestant Reformation begun by Martin Luther. At a time when the Catholic Church was embattled in the Reformation, Philip Neri achieved a spiritual renewal in the Church's capital city of Rome. He has been called both the "Apostle of Rome" and the "saint of joy."

Philip was born in Florence, Italy. He had two sisters and a brother who died as a child. His parents were not wealthy. When he was eighteen years old, Philip's father sent him to live and work with a relative who was successful in business. While there, Philip would often go pray in the mountains. During this time in his life, he had a religious conversion. He decided to dedicate his life to God.

He went to live in Rome in 1533, where he was a tutor for a friend's son. While there, he studied theology, philosophy, and wrote poetry. After several years of study, he sold his books. He donated the money, and Philip started visiting the poor and caring for the sick. He ministered to people who lived in the streets, living a life of poverty himself.

He was well-liked because he was gentle, kind, and had a warm personality. He had a wonderful sense of humor and used this gift when helping others. His two favorite books were the Bible and a joke book. He used his gifts of charm and humor to teach others about Jesus. He shared joy and kindness with the poor and helped them find food and homes.

In 1544, Philip Neri had a mystical experience while praying in the Catacombs of San Sebastian. A globe of fire miraculously entered his chest and enlarged his heart, breaking his ribs. This experience changed him for life.

Even before he became a priest in 1551, Philip Neri increased the faith of many. He spent seventeen years serving as a layman in Rome before being officially ordained. Though he was well known for his cheerfulness, he was a serious preacher and a confessor.

As a priest, Philip Neri began the Congregation of the Oratory in 1575. This group, dedicated to preaching and teaching, was also known as the *Oratorians*. The Oratorians are still active today. A famous Oratorian, Cardinal John Henry Newman, described the approach that Philip Neri employed in inspiring so many people from so many walks of life: "cor ad cor loquitor" or, in English, "heart speaks to heart."

Philip died after a long illness, in May of 1595. The entire city of Rome mourned. Because of Philip, many people's faith was increased. Philip Neri was beatified in 1615 by Paul V and canonized in 1622 by Gregory XV.

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Pope John Paul II wrote of Philip Neri, "The loving figure of the 'saint of joy' even today still maintains intact that irresistible charm that he exercised on all those who drew near him to learn to know and experience the authentic sources of Christian joy. Leafing through the biography of St Philip, in fact, one is surprised and fascinated by the cheerful and relaxed method he used to educate, supporting each person with fraternal generosity and patience" (Letter of His Holiness John Paul II on the Occasion of the IV Centenary of the Death of St Philip Neri, October 7, 1994). Pope Francis also delivered a message marking the 500th anniversary of Saint Philip Neri's birth. He called the saint, "passionate proclaimer of the Word of God."

Philip Neri also began a tradition that continues today. He organized and led walks to important Churches in the city. These walks included music, singing, and laughter and drew many people. Through these little pilgrimages, people of all ages visited important churches in the city while they connected with each other and strengthened their faith.

Philip used humor to solve many problems and to help other people. We can follow his example and use joy and humor to help others.

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Saint Joan of Arc

On May 30, the Church celebrates the feast day of Saint Joan of Arc, a French saint who was faithful to God's will throughout her life.

Joan of Arc was born on January 6, 1412 at Domremy, a small village between France and Lorraine. She lived at the time of the beginning of the Renaissance, which was a revival of classical art, architecture, literature, and learning. This was a time of transition from medieval times to modern times.

Joan also lived during wartime. When Joan of Arc was born, France was involved in the Hundred Years War with England, so named because of its long length. Because of this war, much of the farmland in France was ruined and people were starving because of lack of food. During Joan's life, many people in France died from the Black Death, a deadly plague that was spreading throughout Europe. People lived in fear of not only the English and the plague, but also of local French people who raided towns and villages.

Joan's father was a farmer. Although she did not have much formal education and she could not read or write, her mother taught her prayers. Her parents were known to be good Christians and provided a strong foundation in faith for their daughter. Joan always listened to her parents and tried to do what they asked of her. She attended Mass every day and she tried to help the poor. She was quiet and preferred to play alone rather than with others. She enjoyed playing in the woods and she was good at spinning and weaving cloth.

As the Hundred Years War raged on, Joan's home country of France was divided and had no king. When she was thirteen years old, Joan began hearing the voices of Saint Michael, Saint Catherine, and Saint Margaret. They told Joan that she was chosen by God to unite France and to help Charles be crowned king. Joan was very surprised because she knew nothing about politics or about the military. She wanted to serve God, but she did not know how to help her country. Finally, she realized that this was God's will and that he would lead her.

At first, Joan was laughed at. But soon, without any military training or background, Joan was leading the French army with a banner that read "Jesus and Mary." She began winning battles. Soon the English were gone from many towns in France. The French soldiers loved Joan. Eventually, she saw Charles crowned the king of France.

Later Joan was captured and became a prisoner of the English. After a trial, she was sentenced to death. Joan was said to say, "About Jesus Christ and the Church, I simply know they're just one thing, and we shouldn't complicate the matter." Although she was afraid, Joan remained faithful to God and calmly went to her death holding a crucifix. She died on May 30, 1431. She was nineteen years old.

Even prior to her official canonization in 1920, Joan of Arc was considered a great saint. She has long been a symbol of French unity and nationalism as "the Maid of Orléans." She was beatified in the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris by Pope Pius X in 1909.

Joan of Arc was faithful to God's will in her life. Even when she was laughed at, she kept her focus on God and what he asked her to do. When things seem to be impossible in our lives, we can be like Joan and let our faith guide us, with courage and conviction. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, Joan of Arc "fearlessly bore the great light of the Gospel in the complex events of history. . . . With her luminous witness St Joan of Arc invites us to a high standard of Christian living: to make prayer the guiding motive of our days; to have full trust in doing God's will, whatever it may be; to live charity without favouritism, without limits and drawing, like her, from the Love of Jesus a profound love for the Church." (General Audience, January 26, 2011)

When things seem to be impossible in our lives, we can be like Joan and let our faith guide us.

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Name _____

Saints Isidore and Maria

Isidore was a farmer. He and his wife, Maria, were poor. Even though they did not have much, they shared what they did have with others.

In the space below, write or draw how you can share what you have with others.

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Name _____

Saint Madeline Sophie Barat

Madeline Sophie Barat shared her love of God and love of learning with others. She opened schools for girls so they could receive a good education.

We are blessed with teachers who share their love of learning with us. Think about the teachers in your life who have shared their love of learning with you. Choose one of these teachers, and on the card below, write a note thanking him or her. Cut out the card, and give it to this teacher.

FOLD

FOLD

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The Lives of the Saints

Name _____

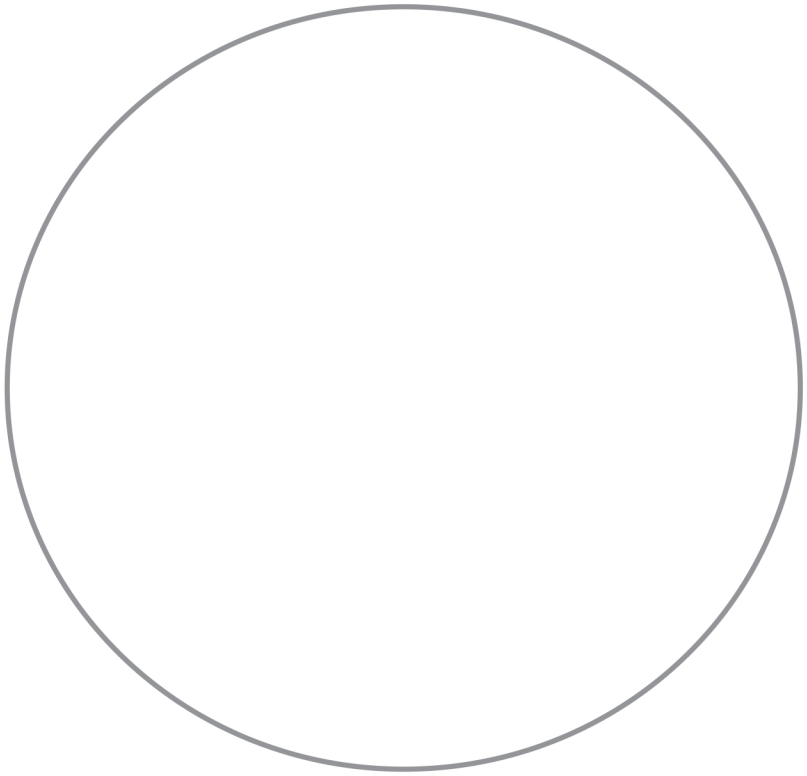
Saint Philip Neri

Saint Philip Neri was a priest who used humor to solve problems. He had a joyful spirit and he loved to make people laugh by sharing jokes. One of his favorite books was a book of jokes.

Saint Philip Neri used his gifts of charm and laughter to teach others about Jesus. He shared joy and kindness with the poor and helped them find food and homes.

How do you feel when someone shares a funny joke with you? How do you feel when you see something funny?

Draw your face to show how you feel.



Say the following prayer:

Saint Philip, help us to share joy and laughter with others. Amen.

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Name _____

Saint Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc grew up in France when her country was at war. She was the daughter of a farmer and lived a very simple, quiet life. She attended Mass every day and loved God very much. As a teenager, she heard the voices of Saint Michael, Saint Catherine, and Saint Margaret telling her that God had a special plan for her. She became the leader of the French army and won many battles. Joan was brave and helped to defend and unite her country.

Draw a picture of one way that God gives you courage.

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